United Nations

Press Release

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General informs President of Security Council of his intention to begin deployment tomorrow of 240 United Nations observers to verify 6 September cease-fire in Western Sahara.

- United Nations investigation of 28 August incident on Bubiyan Island just outside demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait finds no evidence of alleged shooting.

- Need for democratization, literacy, efficient use of resources is stressed in Ad Hoc Committee's review of UN African Recovery programme; proposals include world conference on African debt, reduced military expenditures by African governments.

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About 240 persons including 100 military observers and a small medical team are expected to begin arriving in Western Sahara tomorrow as part of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

A United Nations spokesman told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had decided to begin deployment of the observers to locations indicated in his 19 April report on the operation in time for the cease-fire expected to take effect from 6 September.

The spokesman said the Secretary-General had informed the Security Council President of his intentions as laid out in his report, and taking into account the fact that the parties have accepted 6 September as date for the cease-fire.

Ten observation posts had been chosen for the deployment of about 10 observers each, reaching a total of 240 persons, including the 100 military observers, the rest being given functions with command, control, logistical support and communications.

It was understood, the spokesman said, that the complete deployment of MINURSO would only commence once the activities foreseen in the calendar of

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the plan were sufficiently advanced. The observers would arrive in El Aiun tomorrow, 5 September, in order to be in place in the advance post for the supervision of the cease-fire on Friday. About 50 military observers as well as 15-20 civilians will travel to the area tomorrow, and the same number will travel on Friday.

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An investigation of an incident last week in the island of Bubiyan, just outside the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait, has found no evidence of firing at the location, nor any weapons on the Iraqi boats.

The investigation was undertaken by the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) -- the peace-keeping force charged with overlooking the demilitarized zone between the two countries.

According to Kuwaiti reports, firing broke out between Iraqi and Kuwaiti military, when a Kuwaiti Coast Guard detachment took custody of a number of Iraqi fishing boats and their crews in the waters off Bubiyan Island.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said in a report to the Security Council of 3 September that the UNIKOM team interviewed Kuwaiti airforce pilots, who stated that on the day of the incident after the Coast Guard detachment had left the area with the captured vessels, they had engaged and sunk seven Iraqi boats off Bubiyan. They said they did not know from where those boats had come.

The Secretary-General reported that UNIKOM Major-General Greindl and his staff were continuing their investigation of the incident.

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Democratization of African institutions and efficient use of resources were key aspects of African recovery, speakers said this morning as the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly continued its assessment of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990).

Support was expressed for the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes, which maintained that a healthy, secure and literate population was essential to an economic upturn. One speaker suggested the convening of an International Conference on Africa's External Indebtedness. Another stressed that appeals for a more equitable distribution of global wealth must be accompanied by credible national policies.

Several speakers said high levels of military expenditures should be reconsidered by the African States in the context of national resource distribution. A consolidated approach to external and internal obstacles to development based on recommendations of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Community and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was recommended.

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